

made him describe himself as 'sudden and swift and proud' ; but Herbert, it may be urged, is an older man than Shelley, and allowance must be made for the mellowing effect of age. At the time *Venetia* was written Shelley was still something of a bugbear to the narrow and self-sufficient English world of the day; his fame as a poet had not yet won him forgiveness for his transgressions as a man, and still less for the crude and aggressive opinions which had brought him into such violent collision with orthodoxy as established in Church and State. To Disraeli's credit be it remembered that he was one of the first who had the courage to attempt to do him justice or, in defiance of popular prejudice, to present his personality in a sympathetic light.

The division of parts between the two poets is very curious and complex. The genius and personality of Byron are assigned to Cadurcis ; but the external circumstances of Byron's life are apportioned almost equally between Cadurcis and Herbert. To Cadurcis are given the wilful childhood, the foolish mother, the sudden poetic success, the relations to Lady Caroline Lamb, who appears in the book as Lady Monteagle, and the outburst of popular hostility which closed Byron's career in England ; but his unhappy marriage and subsequent relations to his wife and ' Ada, sole daughter of my house and heart,' are transferred to Herbert, who has the genius and personality of Shelley. Both poets are involved in a common end —the end, in fact, of Shelley. The link between the two in life is *Venetia*, herself a beautiful figure, though, as befits a daughter of Shelley's, almost too ethereal. Long before the world at large was disposed to be just to Disraeli either as a novelist or as a man, some forgotten critic <sup>x</sup> noted that he was almost the first writer <sup>4</sup> who resolutely set himself to picture the child life' and accounted this to his credit 'as proving a greater

<sup>1</sup> His words are preserved in a letter of Sarah Disraeli's, who was ever ready to seize on any morsel of praise bestowed on her beloved brother.